



The Old Ironsides Report

19 Aug 2003

Volume I Issue 29

National Guard MPs and Iraqi Police Keep the Peace in Kadhymiya

Story by Maj. William Walski
Task Force 1-13

BAGHDAD, Iraq - "The 2nd Platoon of the 143rd MP (military police) Company is the best military police unit I have worked with during my 20 years of active duty service in the Army," said Lt. Col. Francis Sherman, Jr. the commander of the 1st Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment.

"I have worked with a variety of MP units, including those from active duty and the reserves, and there are none better than the ones I have working for me right now in Kadhymiya (Baghdad)," he said.

What makes this Connecticut Army National Guard team based out of Hartford, Conn. so effective is their ability to integrate both their civilian and military background into the roles they perform in order to successfully complete them all. Included in this 27-person MP platoon are soldiers whose civilian jobs include working as state troopers, policemen, police academy instructors, corrections officers, and many of the soldiers are majoring criminal justice in college.

The knowledge they bring from their various law enforcement-related civilian jobs is instrumental in allowing them to understand how to do the civil-military jobs they are asked to do in Baghdad.

These jobs revolve around two fundamental roles: their military security missions and their Iraqi Police Force (IPF) training mission. The platoon's National Guard military experience allows them to work hand-in-hand with the task force to fulfill the security requirements of the Kadhymiya district of Baghdad.

Routinely, the task force calls on the MP platoon's expertise to conduct patrols, detain prisoners, and set up traffic control points to secure select sectors within the unit's area of responsibility. They accomplish these missions by employing their military police expertise through a focal lens of Iraqi cultural norms so that they do not alienate the people they are trying to protect.

According to Sgt. Erina Hevey, a loss prevention specialist and criminal justice student in the civilian world, an example of this is that female MPs are responsible for the search of female suspects.

"The females here are very sensitive as to who is allowed to touch them. They respond better to me because I give them the respect they don't get from the males in their society even though they are not used to seeing a woman as a figure of authority."

According to 1st Lt. Michael Rossi, the MP platoon leader, the keys to their success in fulfilling these military security missions while attached to Task Force 1-13 are directly attributed to co-locating with the task force as a direct support MP platoon. Working as part of the TF team has allowed the MPs to be based in the very sectors that they are responsible for policing.

"The task force has given us outstanding support in continuing the 18th MP Brigade mission of standing up the IPF and promoting law and order in Baghdad," Rossi said. "In return, we provide them with a highly mobile asset for tactical operations and a close link with the Iraqi people through our connection with the Iraqi police and our daily interaction with the citizens of Baghdad. In addition, we act as a liaison between the maneuver unit and the Military Police, increasing the communication and coordination between the two."

While importance is given to the military functions they perform in Baghdad to keep the sector secure, the knowledge, which they provide from their civilian jobs to the newly formed IPF is even more instrumental. The MP's police mission involves the training and mentoring of the IPF.

Their efforts in this area are critical since the success of the U.S. mission hinges on the ability of this newly formed police force to provide an internal security force to Baghdad, independent of the coalition military forces currently providing that security.



Brig. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, 1st Armored Division commander, talks to soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team Sunday discuss topics such as combat readiness while in Iraq; Morale, Welfare and Recreation opportunities while deployed; and if 1AD will return to Germany upon completion of the deployment. Dempsey plans to visit all 1AD assets while in Baghdad to discuss soldiers' expectations during this deployment. (Photo by Spc. Christopher Stanis, 1AD PAO)

One of the keys to the MP platoon's success is that they work daily to understand the culture of the police force they are dealing with. Joint patrols normally start and end with the traditional hugs between compatriots as the MPs continue to try and foster a cooperative environment between the two forces.

They then go out to complete their daily joint police operations, which, according to Sgt. Jason Bjornberg of Old Saybrook, Conn., a sociology and criminal justice student who spends his summers working for the Department of Environmental Protection, can range from serving warrants to responding to all types of criminal activities including shootings and carjackings.

Bjornberg also said that the military police are instrumental in building a sense of respect among the Iraqi police.

"The Iraqi police seem to have had trouble gaining or holding the respect of the local populous during Saddam's regime," he said.

"Now that the community sees the IPs working with us, doing things correctly, taking pride in their work, and respecting the civil rights of the people like they never did during Saddam's reign, the Iraqi public now respects the IPS, and that in itself will help bring law and order to the country," Bjornberg said.

The 2nd Platoon, 143rd MP Company continues to seamlessly integrate into the Task Force 1-13 security plan through its direct interaction with the battalion. It also serves as the bridge between the IPF and the task force in order to ensure all of their security operations work toward the fundamental goal of the entire Coalition presence: an Iraq run by Iraqis.

Sherman calls them the best MP platoon he has ever worked with in his military career. That's a good thing, because it will take all of their multiple qualities to successfully complete the mission they have been called to do and safely return home to their loved ones once that mission is complete.

NEWS

French Official Resigns After Heat Deaths

PARIS (AP) - A senior French health official resigned Monday after the health minister acknowledged that as many as 5,000 people might have died in a blistering heat wave. Lucien Abenham, director general of health, said he was leaving his post because of the criticism leveled at the government over its handling of the heat wave earlier this month. He sent his resignation letter to embattled Health Minister Jean-Francois Mattei.

A Smart Tip from 1AD Safety

HELICOPTER LANDING ZONE PREPARATION:

- **Consider Wind Direction**
(helicopters need to land into the wind)
- **Ensure The Direction of Approach & Take Off is Free of Obstacles**
(i.e. trees, power lines, towers, etc)
- **Ensure Landing Zone (LZ) is Clear of Debris and if Possible Cleared by EOD**
- **Mark LZ with Smoke or VS 17 Panels**
(VS 17 must be properly staked down)
- **At Night LZ Must be Marked by Pre-Arranged Method**
(IR Light or Red Chemlit, Blue or Green Chemlit Cannot be Seen With NVGs or Vehicle Lights)

Chaplain's thought for the day:

Unlikely Servants

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise.

—1 Corinthians 1:27

We often hear people say things like: "I'm only a housewife." "I'm only a janitor." "I'm only an average student." Or we might say, "I'm only a private." Underestimating one's usefulness to God is nothing new. In Old Testament times, for example, when God looked for someone to conquer the troublesome Midianites, He chose unimpressive Gideon, calling him a "mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:12). Gideon responded, "How can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (v.15). But God persisted, saying, "Have I not sent you? . . . Surely I will be with you" (vv.14-16). Gideon became God's man for the task, because there's no such thing as a "nobody" in His eyes.

SPORTS

Greece Olympic Preparations Remain Rocky

ATHENS, Greece (AP) - Premier Costas Simitis acknowledged that problems continue to plague Olympic preparations, yet IOC inspectors seem ready to give Athens a positive report on recent test events. "Problems? They exist today. That is exactly why we are doing the test events: to see where there are shortcomings," Simitis said Monday. "We do not have the illusions that everything is perfect - anything but. But because of this, we want to go forward with plans and decisiveness."

Oddly Enough:

Man Covers Up Replica of Nude 'David'

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (AP) -- A man who put a replica of Michelangelo's nude "David" sculpture in his yard responded to neighbors' objections by engaging in a cover-up. Christopher Schapker last week used a strategically placed sheet to counteract concerns about the male nude in the side yard of his home. Parents of students who attend a neighboring center that provides services for disabled people had expressed concern over the statue's nudity. At first, none of the children at the center noticed the statue. Once it was pointed out, it became the source of much discussion, said Rosemary Durbin, whose young daughter spends her days at the Evansville ARC Center. Police Chief Dave Gullledge said he had not received any formal complaints about the statue. "My preliminary thought is that it does not violate any statute," Vanderburgh County Prosecutor Stan Levco said. "But I haven't made a final determination." The David statue is not the only potentially objectionable decoration in Schapker's yard. "I've had a topless mermaid in my pond for two years that no one has said one thing about," he said.

On This Day In History: *August 19th, 1953*

The Iranian military, with the support and financial assistance of the United States government, overthrows the government of Premier Mohammed Mosaddeq and reinstates the Shah of Iran on August 19, 1953. Iran remained a solid Cold War ally of the United States until a revolution ended the Shah's rule. During this time the Shah became one of America's most trusted Cold War allies, and U.S. economic and military aid poured into Iran during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. In 1978, however, anti-Shah and anti-American protests broke out in Iran and the Shah was toppled from power in 1979.

source:historychannel.com